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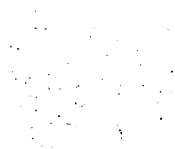


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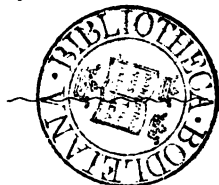
OR,

Christ's Footsteps Followed.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

MY little work must either stand or fall by itself, for I have at this moment no time to give from parish duties, to write what may be called a Preface.

Nor, indeed, is it needful. The object of the book is fully stated in the introductory chapter; and the only point upon which a word need now be added, is respecting the way in which I have striven to carry it out.

When the wish first presented itself to me to investigate the life of the Lord Jesus in its chronological order, I naturally recommenced the study of the Gospels, aided by such authors as either my own library:

or the kindness of friends put within my reach. Alford, Trench, Wordsworth, Stier, Bengel, had for years been of the utmost service to me in many ways, and occasionally I had consulted Lightfoot, Gresswell, Lange, Westcott, and others.

With the help of materials so supplied, I began my labour of love, and had indeed made some progress in it, when I met with a book of which I had of course often heard, and which I would earnestly commend to my reader: Bishop Ellicott's "Historical Lectures on the Life of our Lord."

A perusal of that invaluable work will show how far, and in how many points, I am indebted to it; but it will also show that I have by no means slavishly followed it. I dared not, even in deference to so great an authority, give conclusions which

did not commend themselves to my own mind.

It must not be supposed, that because my work is short, it is wanting in accuracy. I, at least, could give the results no more accurately, had I occupied four times the space.

Conciseness, with accuracy, has been my aim; and I trust that many whose time is limited, but to whom the subject is attractive, may feel not the less disposed to study the subject owing to the brevity of its treatment.

As regards the style, while it is hoped that its plainness will make it *directly* useful to a large number of Sunday-school teachers, visitors of the poor, holders of mothers' meetings, and Christian workers generally, it is believed on the other hand, that the



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PART I.

*To the Close of the Second Year's
Ministry.*

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

THE AIM.

I PROPOSE, by God's help, to enter into the consideration of that fact, to which His Church's very existence is witness, which by universal consent has cut a deeper mark on the world, has drawn to itself more earnest human thought, called up more deep human feeling, and led to more noble human action, than any other fact in man's history. I mean the fact of the life of Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth.

To us believers that life is more than profoundly interesting: it furnishes, taken in connection with its causes on the one hand,

and its effects on the other, the One subject before which all others fade ; for we believe that the life of Jesus was God's life manifest in the flesh,—that this Man was the Saviour, the Son of the Highest.

In approaching a subject so manifold in its aspects, and so infinite and exhaustless in its teaching respecting God and respecting man,—respecting Sin and Love, and Love's sacrifice for Sin,—respecting the mysteries of the Eternal purpose, redemption, salvation,—respecting the election of Jew and Gentile, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the exaltation of a new race of men in a new Adam,—it is well at the outset, nay, it is almost needful, to indicate the line I wish to choose and follow.

I have chosen a very simple line, but one very important. God grant it may be useful

to many! I have set before myself the life of Jesus, to be viewed, not philosophically, not even doctrinally (save where doctrine lies in the very path of the subject), but as a history.

Perhaps my object will be best explained by a reference to my own past experience as a reader of the Gospels. For many years was I without any clear and comprehensive view of the whole career of our Lord; hence, after studying a given parable, or miracle, or incident, I often found myself unable to fit that particular page into the whole book of His life. The parable, or miracle, or incident, was indeed a gem whose beauty and brilliance could not but be recognized, but to which I could not find the proper setting. But so desirable did it seem to have the light of context, and this comprehensive

view of Christ's life, that some years ago I began, with all obtainable help, to read it afresh with special reference to this; and I humbly thank God that I did so, for a flood of new light was shed to me on many of its parts.

Now the difficulties, needs, and helps of one Christian, are for the most part those of others. Doubtless there are very many who have also been unable to form for themselves that clear and distinct view of Christ's whole ministry which they would most gladly obtain; and, therefore, trusting to be enabled to help some at least of my readers, I propose to consider Christ's life and ministry in its chronological order, and to bring out the connection of its unutterably important facts.

At the outset let us ask what is it that makes the difficulty we all feel in gathering that wondrous career into one connected

whole? Undoubtedly it is the fact of our having four Gospels instead of one. And we can hardly put ourselves into the right avenue of approach to this subject, unless we fully recognize at the very commencement the different characteristics of the Gospels. While they are all equally God-given portraits of Him who is fairer than the children of men, these portraits are not only drawn by different hands, but also from a somewhat different point of view.

The characteristics of the four Gospels have been so admirably summed up by Bishop Ellicott, that I shall be forgiven if I give some of their leading features almost in his words.

The first Gospel was written for the Jews. Hence its abounding all through with appeals to Old Testament Scriptures. "Then

was fulfilled," or "That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet," is Matthew's continual comment. Hence, too, the opening description: "The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of *David*, the son of *Abraham*." Hence, probably, the early contrast between the Prince of Peace and the savage Herod, the adoration of the Gentile Kings, the foretold sojourn of the true Israel in Egypt, and the vivid pictures of Christ as theocratic King and suffering Messiah.

And how striking the divinely ordered connection between this Gospel and Him who wrote it! Matthew, the exciseman, sitting daily at the custom-house, accustomed to order and method throughout his life,—he it is chosen not only to give the bearing of the Gospel incidents on the Old

Testament narrative, but also to give to the Church the words and deeds of Jesus in the most methodized form. Where have we such a procession of miracles as in Matt. viii. and ix.? Where such a galaxy of parables as in Matt. xiii.,—seven pearls on one golden thread?

The scope of St. Mark's Gospel seems also given in its first verse: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." While in Matthew we see now the glorious Redeemer, now the suffering Messiah, in Mark we have only one picture nearly paramount,—that of the all-powerful, incarnate Son of God. Christ's power, Christ's majesty, Christ's wisdom, and their effects on the people, amazement, awe, and even fear, are described with a graphic force peculiar to the nephew of Barnabas.

Still more striking, if possible, is the individuality of the third Gospel. Written by a Gentile (Luke, the cultured physician of Antioch), and especially for Gentiles, it presents Christ less as the Son of David and Son of Abraham, less even as omnipotent Son of God, than as in the broadest sense the God-man, the Friend and Redeemer of all fallen humanity; or, as his own genealogy declares it, Son of *Adam* and Son of God. Luke it is who alone gives the world-embracing parables of the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, and the Good Samaritan.

But what can we say of John's Gospel? Most emphatically does it also stand alone. Written long after the other three, and with a view not so much of converting to the faith as of establishing believers (Jews and Gentiles) in the faith, it both goes deeper

and ascends higher than they. While Mark opens with John's baptism, while Matthew goes no further back than the espousal of Joseph and Mary, and even Luke begins with the angelic announcement, John in his first chapter lifts the veil, and shows us Christ pre-existent in heaven.

And its being written for Christians accounts both for omissions and contents; omissions of facts, like the nativity and the ascension, which, though of the first importance, were well-known and acknowledged; and the substitution for the incidents of miracles, of a glory higher than any of operative majesty,—the inner tranquil glory of Christ's life of conscious union with the eternal Father. And the few miracles recorded (chiefly those performed at Jerusalem, as those of the other Evangelists took place

chiefly in the provinces) seem little more than vehicles for Christ's accompanying words, which indeed almost form the last Gospel.

But what words! As we read, they seem to bring before us the very face of the Holy One who uttered them, and to take us, on wings of humble and adoring faith and love, through the heavenly gates to the very throne of God and of the Lamb.

Such, briefly, are the four Gospels, the four streams which God in richest mercy has sent forth to fertilize our Eden. And as from the study of all as equally "the Gospel," we involuntarily form our ideas of the character of Christ, so it is from that same study we must deduce that complete career to which, as far as the week of the passion, we will, by God's help, now proceed.

CHAPTER II.

The Private Life and the First Miracle.

MODE OF PROCEEDING.

IF we have any complex subject of study before us—no matter what—which we wish to master, what do we do? We carefully choose out its leading features—its landmarks,—and then, breaking it up into the divisions so supplied, consider each division separately. Now the life of Christ has such great landmarks. They are (1) the epiphany at the age of twelve; (2) the baptism at the age of thirty; (3) the first rejection, with all its mighty after-effects; (4) the transfiguration.

These four give us, either in themselves or their consequences, the key to the whole. Let us now proceed to the divisions either so caused or represented.

And first, Christ's life before the ministry.

For this we must begin by consulting Matthew and Luke, each in their two first chapters. St. Luke commences earliest, giving in chap. i., some suppose from the lips of Mary herself, the announcement by Gabriel (the Evangelic Angel in the New Testament, as in the Old) of the miraculous conception, Mary's journey to Elizabeth, probably for spiritual support under that cross of Christ which *she* had to bear *before* His birth, and her return. Now comes in Matthew's account of the revelation of the truth to Joseph, and the nativity, which Luke also gives, but more circumstantially.

The poll-tax under Cyrenius brings David's descendants to David's city, and there the "Son of David" is born.

One of the most intelligent, at least, of modern travellers, has shown reasons for believing that Christ was born in an out-building of the very house which had seen David's birth; Jesse's house having been given by Solomon to Chimham, the son of Barzillai, and afterwards, it is believed, turned into the caravanserai, or inn, in one of the open arches attached to which, for want of other room, the Redeemer of the world was born. Luke alone records the accompanying miracles,—the lighting up of the dark heavens at His birth, at whose death the midday sun was darkened, and the angelic anthem. It is he alone who recounts the circumcision of the

sinless One, and the redemption as Mary's firstborn of the Redeemer, with Simeon's and Anna's prophecies. But here comes in Matthew's solitary history of the visit and adoration of the magi, the guiding-star, the flight into Egypt, the murder of Christ's first martyrs, the return *towards* Judæa, but the cautious turning aside to the older home among the Galilæan hills.

After the close of Matt. ii., one verse in St. Luke—significant contrast with the Apocryphal Gospels—sketches the next eleven years: "The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon Him." But then follows the first recorded act of the future Redeemer, and the first recorded words of the Word of God. He is now twelve years old (an age then corresponding to our confirmation time),

and He is therefore taken up to keep His first Passover. But there He is lost to Mary, just as at a later Passover He was lost to her, and also as then for three days; and when He is found, it is in "His Father's house," and speaking of "His Father's business." This is the only record of the youth of Jesus,—the one solitary flower plucked from the inclosed garden of the thirty years, but plucked just as the Rose of Sharon is beginning to burst into bloom.

But Jesus went back to Nazareth with them, "and was subject unto them;" "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." These few words of St. Luke shadow out the character of Christ's life for eighteen more years. The Nazarene neighbours knew not what Mary, who kept all and pondered, knew. To them the car-

pen-ter's son was merely a pious and promising young man, a regular attendant at the synagogue, and a good son at home, working of late years as a "carpenter" for His now widowed mother's support. So He was in favour not only with God, but with these very men who afterwards cast Him out of their synagogue, and tried to throw Him headlong from the brow of the hill.

Let us notice here,—no man who is not Satanic hates truth in the abstract; but, on the contrary, more or less approves it. The Jews hated Christ only when He applied truth,—told *them* the truth.

But when Jesus was thirty years old, the age at which the priests entered on their office, then the time had come; the hidden glory burst forth, and the ministry began.

He goes (yet unknown), like all beside, to be baptized of John ; when, as He comes up out of the water, lo, the opened heaven, the Father's voice, "This is my beloved Son," and the descending Spirit ! Then immediately follows the trial by the devil of this new "Son of God"—this Second Adam,—in the wilderness this time ; but Christ's victory follows too, and the ministry of angels, and His return to John.

It is here that St. John's Gospel first comes in (i. 29): "John seeth Jesus coming unto Him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God." And the next day, on the testimony being repeated, two men (only two, but representing the multitude no man can number) begin to follow Christ. The day following, the number has swollen to five ; and with these, Jesus, who, remember,

had never yet taught, or wrought a miracle, goes northward from Bethabara, towards Galilee.

Doubtless Christ's destination is Nazareth, with a view to see His mother Mary; but He finds her not at Nazareth, but a few miles off, on a visit in a little town called Cana.

On the third day, they arrive to find a wedding preparing. We all know the sequel. The friends of the poor are poor, the guests are more than originally contemplated, and the wine (such as it is) runs short. Then follows Christ's first miracle, which creates abundance of "good wine," relieves their embarrassment and poverty, and so manifests forth His glory that His new disciples "believe" on Him.

And now events flow rapidly. Christ,

with His mother and His disciples, goes to Capernaum, but only for a short sojourn, "not many days," because the Passover is near, and Jesus intends to go up to Jerusalem, and inaugurate His open ministry there.



CHAPTER III.

The Judæan Ministry.

CHARACTERISTIC OPENING.

HE goes up, and His Judæan ministry, or, to make it as clear as I can, His ministry in the metropolitan district, commences. This section of Christ's work is found at length only in St. John, from ii. 13 to end of ch. v., though it is referred to in Matthew and Mark.

It commences characteristically: the righteous One is "bold as a lion," and begins by overthrowing the tables of the money-changers in the temple; then He performs such miracles that many at the Passover believe, and even a member of the Govern-

ment comes to Him, though by night. The feast being past, Jesus goes down to the Jordan (not far from Jerusalem), and there begins to baptize by His disciples; and soon His followers outnumber those of John, who was still at large, and baptizing near at hand.

So far all had gone well: not a single enemy had appeared. But when Jesus *knew* (iv. 1) that the Pharisees had heard of His success, He, knowing what was in man, breaks off His work in Judæa for a while, and again goes northward, "through the midst of Samaria." On the way the Son of man is faint and weary with His journey, and rests at noon under the shadow of the trees at Jacob's well. Then the woman comes to draw water, and through her Samaria hears and receives the Word of

God. After two days He continues His journey, and arrives again at Cana, the home of Nathanael, and the site of the first miracle. Here a nobleman intercedes for his son, ill at the adjoining Capernaum, and obtains his cure.

But the Son of David still seems to consider the metropolis the place to set up His kingdom, for (v. 1) after a little while He again goes up to a feast; not this time *the* feast of the Passover, but probably that of Purim,—the feast commemorative of Esther's successful pleading against Haman. Here Christ, in the midst of the crowded city, openly cures the man at the pool of Bethesda.

But, alas, it is the Sabbath day!

Who and what can He be who has done such an impious thing? For the first time

the Pharisees' smouldering suspicion and dislike leaps into a flame. Remember, reader, that John v. is the turning-point in Christ's career,—His first rejection. See ver. 16. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day." But Christ, quite undismayed, though knowing that He was now to be opposed by all the learning and wealth, and alas, far worse, all the religion of the nation,—goes on to make Himself equal with God, to prophecy of His coming to judgment, and to denounce *them*—them the Pharisees!—as not having the love of God in them.

Amid all the perfections of Christ's human character, I think we sometimes lose sight of this—His sublime courage. It is indeed difficult, at this distance of time and

place, to get a sufficient estimate of it. But if in England all the upper classes—all the peers of the realm and great commoners, all the merchant princes and rich traders, all the professional classes in Church and State,—were fused together into one vast and almost omnipotent class, and then, supported by the sympathies of the great bulk of the people, were confronted by only one man, and by him incessantly opposed, exposed, denounced; charged with fraud, hypocrisy, cruelty, oppression; made war upon and defied, with evident readiness to take all consequences,—even then we should have but a partial idea of Christ's courage, living as He did, when the ruler's argument was the very speedy one of stoning, or the cross.

However, Christ's time was not yet come,

so He escaped their hands. But this rejection abruptly closed the Judæan ministry, twelve months after it had first begun ; and from that time forth, Jesus chiefly ministers in the northern province.



CHAPTER IV.

The Ministry in Galilee.

AMONG HIS OWN.

CHRIST now goes down to Nazareth, where He was brought up (now comes in Luke iv. 16), and where He had been "in favour." They at least will receive Him. Alas, not now! Have they not heard of His opposing the great doctors at Jerusalem?—He, the carpenter's son! And when He proceeds to warn *them*, they thrust Him not only out of the synagogue, but the city also, and attempt His life. In vain. The Lord of Life can save His own till the hour is come; and so He, passing through the midst, goes His way, to dwell at Capernaum.

And now begins the period of Christ's ministry in Eastern Galilee, or, as we should say, the Lake country. It is the most wonderful period, if we may reverently say so, in that life which is all wonder, and yet all so real. It probably lasted a year and eleven days—the dates of the feasts are known. It is Isaiah's "acceptable year of the Lord."

Reader, try to picture the scene of His labours. A country in character not unlike our Lake country, with a glorious lake much the size of Keswick; only you must transfer the whole to a southern climate. Those who have chanced to see the Italian lakes, and especially the largest of them, have, we are told, little to imagine in the Sea of Galilee in our Lord's time. The blue sky and the blue water, the mountains clothed to their very summits, the fig-trees and

vines and olive-yards and corn-fields, are all the same. The very fishing-boats are the same pattern. The sparkling white towns, the splendid villas and gardens, correspond. The very style of architecture had come from Italy. Capernaum was a stately and brilliant watering-place. Tiberias contained the royal residence, fresh from Italian hands. Overlooking both lakes in the north, is a ridge of snow-peaks.

In and around this rarely beautiful district, teeming with population, busy with trade and manufacture, bristling with towns and villages, Christ now labours. To give full details of His working would be impossible. They are found in the three first, (the Synoptic) Gospels almost exclusively: St. Matt. iv. 13, to the end of ch. xv.; St. Mark i. 14, to the end of ch. vi.; St. Luke

iv. 31, to ix. 17,—that is, several chapters in each; while in St. John only one incident is recorded,—the last,—in ch. vi.

We will just notice the general outline of events. Among the very earliest occurrences at Capernaum, are the final call as Apostles of those already called to the faith (they were not yet twelve, however); the first of the two miraculous draughts of fishes; the healing of Peter's wife's mother; the casting out of the unclean spirit in the synagogue; and the healing of the crowds brought into the streets. All these signs and wonders seemingly took place in a day or two after His arrival. And Capernaum did not (like Jerusalem and Nazareth had done, and as she did afterwards) now reject Him. On the contrary, His name was spread abroad, and all the city was gathered at His doors.

But now our Lord commences a more systematic ministry, by preaching for the first time in Galilæan circuits, making Capernaum the fixed centre. The substance of His preaching is briefly given: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

On His first circuit He heals a leper, but returns so as to be at Capernaum by the next Sabbath, when He cures the paralytic, who is necessarily let down through the roof, "because of the press."

But what Luke now tells us is significant,—that the doctors of the law were there *from Jerusalem*. Had they been sent there to watch? If so, they had not long to wait for offence, for Christ never compromised His blessed truth. He actually chooses a "wicked publican" to be one of His "Apostles," as He calls them, and goes to a feast

at his house, "eats and drinks with publicans and sinners!" Then they complain, "How is it that He eateth with publicans and sinners?" Christ answers, that sinners are just the people He came to save. The next Sabbath complaints deepen. Why do Thy disciples, under your sanction, that which is not lawful? Actually rubbing out corn on the Sabbath day! Christ says that the Sabbath was made for man, not the converse, and especially claims for Himself Lordship of the Sabbath.

Now, we read, "they watch Him." And the next Sabbath, Christ, quite undaunted, goes into the crowded synagogue, singles out a man with a withered hand, challenges their attention, and then cures him before them all. The effect was instantaneous. They were "filled with madness," and sum-

mon a council at Capernaum, as they had at Jerusalem. For the first time we read of the proposed league with the Herodians (mere secularists), by which all "trifling differences" must be for the time "sunk," to accomplish the common object and destroy Christ.

Jesus now temporarily retires to the neighbouring mountains, where the common people follow Him ; and foreseeing the end afar off, He now fills up the number of the Apostles, preaches the sermon on the mount, and shortly after returns to Capernaum.

There occurs the healing of the servant of one of the officers of the Roman garrison ; and the first raising of the dead follows at Nain, hard by. Another missionary circuit ends as usual at Capernaum, where His mother await Him, and also the

foiled, but still watchful Pharisees. His cure of the blind demoniac is followed by such an outburst of Satanic rage and malice, that it would almost seem as if the outgoing devil had entered into them; only now it was not dumb, but a devil speaking blasphemously: "He casts out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." Christ answers that this is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable sin.

Now comes the first teaching by parables, in order that seeing they at least may not see, though so close to the pillar of fire, and though others shall rejoice in its light; and in the evening follows the storm on the lake, and its miraculous stilling. On the other side, Christ casts the legion out of the demoniac, but at the request of those who have lost their swine, departs, and returns to

Capernaum, where He again raises the dead, in the person of Jairus' daughter.

Probably at this time occurs another visit of the long-suffering Saviour to the synagogue at Nazareth, where His life had been attempted. He willeth not that any should perish. Though they still cavil, and refuse to believe the Gospel, they let Him now depart unmolested. Only "He could not do there many mighty works because of their unbelief," and returns towards Capernaum, teaching in the intermediate villages. And thence it is, He (in view of the future) commissions and empowers the twelve to go forth without Him for the first time, two and two, both healing and preaching His Gospel.

Shortly after their return comes the news of the Baptist's murder, and that Herod

had "heard" of Christ Himself. Jesus at once retires into the wilderness ; but the common people, who are oscillating between Him and the Pharisees, love to hear Him, and follow Him in thousands. Pass-over caravans swell the multitude ; and Christ, moved with compassion for these shepherdless sheep, teaches them till sunset, and then—astounding miracle!—feeds them all (and more than five thousand of them are men) with five country loaves, and two fishes from the adjoining lake.

There is a sudden burst of enthusiasm, corresponding to that of the entry into Jerusalem on the Palm Sunday, just a year after. Wonder, admiration, faith, mingled with lower motives, are condensed into one act: they try to compel Him to reign over them ; and would take Him by force with

them to Jerusalem, and there crown Him King of the Jews.

Of course this may seem to us a very absurd idea on the part of a crowd of poor people; but if we understand the state of national affairs, it was not half so absurd as it may otherwise seem. The whole national mind was at this time in a continual ferment of hatred of the Romans, and expectation of the deliverer. The Herodians were the only Jewish partizans the Romans had, and they were very few. The Sadducees would have joined, as they afterwards did, the national party. Strange as it may sound, the Pharisees, our Lord's inveterate enemies, would (had He but consented to be King) have been His warmest supporters. But they could not endure One who, while professing to be King, yet

surrounded Himself with publicans and fishermen, and said, "Woe to you Pharisees! Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

But had Christ at any time, had He on that night, instead of forcing His Apostles to leave Him, and dismissing the overawed multitude, consented to be King, the whole nation would probably have risen in revolt, two hundred thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards, and the Jews, ever one of the bravest races in the world, must at least for a time, as afterwards, have overpowered Roman resistance. But of course it was not to be. Christ seemed doomed to disappoint everybody, Pharisees, Sadducees, common people, all alike, except those who wanted what He had to give them,—eternal life.

And so He is left alone, and is alone all night in prayer to His Father; and then walks on the water to His toiling disciples, and returns to Capernaum.

On the next Sabbath day He there gives the wonderful discourse of John vi., on the bread of life. It is too spiritual for the discernment of many,—“How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” and from that day begins the rejection at Capernaum. Many go back and walk no more with Him. There is a change of feeling, which, in spite of continued miracles, the Pharisees of Capernaum and Jerusalem are able to take instant advantage of. They ask, “Why do Thy disciples eat with unwashen hands?” Christ answers, “Why do ye transgress the commands of God?” and turning to the multitude, He denounces the blind guides

who are leading them into the ditch. And with that His ministry in Eastern Galilee ceases, for coincident with this change in public feeling comes the news that Herod desires to *see* Christ; and Jesus, if only for security, once more leaves Capernaum, and this time for the northern, and half-heathen border-land of Tyre and Sidon.



CHAPTER V.

Summary of Part I.

REVIEW.

WE have seen that after the one great incident of the private life of the thirty years (the epiphany in the temple), the next great event is the baptism at the age of thirty, when He is commissioned for His work by the Father, and endued with the Spirit; that after the first miracle He opens His ministry in Judæa, and that after a certain success He is rejected by the blind guides at Jerusalem; that this rejection of John v. is the turning-point of the ministry, for it leads to His going down to the province of Galilee, where, after His rejection at Naza-

reth, He removes to Capernaum. Here His ministry lasts much the same time as the Judæan,—about twelve months. The outlines of its wonders we have considered, and the causes which led to its close.

I have given results, and not always the reasons for them. There are doubtless occasional difficulties of arrangement with which I have not thought it needful to trouble the reader, for these difficulties can be generally surmounted by a little patience, and the few minor points regarding which the key seems yet withheld, leave the results given virtually unaffected.

My believing readers, let us all study Christ more. If a man loves not Christ, it is simply because he does not really know Him. To know the lovely is to love. To know Christ is to love Him. To know Him

better is to love Him better, to serve Him better, and better to keep His commandments.

But perhaps some may glance at these pages who have never seen any beauty in Christ, that they should desire Him. To them let me say, Study Christ afresh! Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession! Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself! See that life! Behold that Man! I verily believe that of all objects worthy of the study of a man, as a spiritual, moral, and intellectual being, infinitely beyond all comparison, is this life of Christ.

There He is—attracting mystery—divinely holy, pure, loving, patient, wise, powerful; GOD—yet man: One with us in all true humanity and weakness. The Holy

One suffers Himself to be called a devil; the pure One, a drunkard; the Just One is charged with lying; the all-loving One is profoundly hated; the Fountain of all wisdom is a madman. He who wields the omnipotence of God is so patient, that His enemies know right well that He will not harm them, though they laugh in His face, and deride Him, and hunt Him down; and at last, when they have got Him into their power, make Him a felon, and hang Him on a tree.

So it was: but, remember, it was all for you. The teaching, the power, the patience, the tears, the prayers, the wandering, the buffeting, the mocking, the death,—and, thank God, the resurrection too,—all was for you. And if the King's Son, the Son of God, left His crown on the empty

throne, and gave His all for you,—and the Son of Man became the outcast even of men, and left even His crown of humanity at the foot of the cross, that in Him you might become a son of God and sit with Him on His throne,—is it *impossible* for you to give your poor heart to Him? and falling in spirit at His feet, cry like one of old, “My Lord and my God”?

No, it is not impossible. You can *if you will*.

To day that same Jesus of Nazareth knocks, and cries at your heart's door, “Open and let Me in;” and on this day of salvation every man can say, if he will, “Lord, take my heart! I cannot give it as I would, though it is worth nothing. Take it, and make it Thine!”

Then Christ comes in, and that is “Eternal Life.”



“ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth
with the Holy Ghost and with Power :
who went about doing good, and healing
all that were oppressed of the devil : for
God was with Him.”

ACTS x. 38.

“ And they crucified Him.”

MATT. xxvii. 35.



PART II.

The Third Year's Ministry.

CHAPTER I.

Wanderings.

THE LAST YEAR.

RESUMING our study of the active ministry of the Lord Jesus, we have before us another period of about twelve months,—the third and last year; for the miracle of feeding the five thousand, which, as we have seen, virtually led to the conclusion of the Galilæan ministry, took place when “the Passover was nigh at hand,” and at the following Passover Christ was Himself the Paschal Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world.

It is, we may say at the outset, of a character quite different to that of the other

two. If we would characterize it in one word, it is the period of wandering. The already rejected of men was through most of it being absolutely hunted. Unbelief had now become confirmed, and had almost passed into the final and irremediable stage. It is in this third year Christ calls that generation the great demoniac, respecting which all casting out is in vain, and in which the seven devils should ultimately dwell.

In connection with this we may here notice a most striking feature in this last portion of the ministry,—a great diminution in the number of His miracles. Though He still occasionally works them, they are seemingly not one for fifty before, and these are apparently more for the sake of the poor sufferers themselves, than with any hope of influencing their fellow-countrymen. As be-

fore at Nazareth, so now all through, Jesus did "not many mighty works, because of their unbelief." Still there is no trace of moroseness or bitterness, which is the danger of so many ardent and noble minds, like Elijah's, in their sense of failure. To the last He rewards faith wherever He meets with it, and unsoured by His cruel wrongs, on His last journey stops to bless the little children, and cures Malchus on His way to the cross.

But let us now proceed to details. Christ, on leaving Capernaum, goes (according to Matt. xv. 21, Mark vii. 24) into the border-land of Tyre and Sidon, in which Dan and its golden calf had once stood. The district was now half heathen, half Jewish; just within the Jewish frontier, which seemingly the Lord never crossed. Personally He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the

house of Israel. Doubtless for security "He entered into a house, and would have no man know it." But He whose very name is as perfume (ointment) poured forth, "could not be hid." Among the throng comes a woman, heathen in faith and Canaanitish in race, with cries for her daughter's cure; and Jesus, full of compassion, and marvelling at her faith, gives her, the outcast, through delay, far more than she asked.

But as the needed seclusion was not to be had here, Christ wanders more to the East, "nigh unto the Sea of Galilee" (St. Matthew), and ultimately, indeed, "unto the Sea of Galilee" (St. Mark), only "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis;" that is, still avoiding Capernaum and the western side, He turned to the south-east, crossing the Jordan near the lake, and approached the lake itself

from its semi-heathen coast. The Decapolis was a confederation of ten heathen cities fringing its south-eastern border; and one of them (Pella) was afterwards famous as the refuge of the Christians who fled from the siege of Jerusalem. And then were Christ's words fulfilled: "Not a hair of your head shall perish."

Here, according to St. Mark, Christ cures one who was deaf and dumb, and instantly all that simple district rings with His praise: "He doeth all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." And then, as a natural consequence, vast multitudes come together, and Jesus, after many cures, once again miraculously feeds a host, the number this time being four thousand.

Oh, the wonderful patience, as well as

power of Christ! This miracle was wrought in the very region where previously they had prayed Him to depart out of their coasts.

But now see more of Christ's long-suffering. He takes boat again for the neighbourhood of Capernaum, and lands at Dalmanutha, almost a part (as is now believed) of Magdala itself. But the Pharisees, though still prevented from striking an open blow for fear of the common people, who were not yet as tractable as they should be respecting Christ, lose not one chance of weakening His already waning Jewish influence. They come this time with the Sadducees (the religious sceptics of their day, the Herodians being mere politicians), and they, we read, began to dispute with Him, and to demand a sign from Heaven. Well can we understand Mark viii. 12: "He

sighed deeply in His Spirit." He had come again to bless, if they would, but they would not. He simply asks, "Why do you ask a sign? Is all I have done nothing?" and at once returns in the same boat to the other side, cautioning the twelve on the passage respecting the Pharisees and Sadducees. Arrived at Bethsaida (not the city of Andrew and Peter, but the eastern Bethsaida, or Bethsaida Julias), He cures one poor blind man brought to Him, and again leaves the lake shore, and goes northward, to a yet unvisited quarter near the springs of Jordan, and quite close to the great fir forests and eternal snows of Lebanon,—the neighbourhood of Cæsaræa Philippi.

CHAPTER II.

Glory.

PETER'S CONFESSION.

THERE is only one recorded miracle here, but that I have already called the last great turning point of our Lord's life.

In fact, only three incidents here are narrated. First, Peter's remarkable confession of faith. Besides St. Matthew and St. Mark, St. Luke gives this (ch. ix. 18), which apparently is his only notice of this section of the ministry. Christ asks not only, "Whom do men say that I am?" but "Whom say *ye*?" and Peter answers, "The Christ of God."

And then instantly follows, in sharp con-

trast, the second occurrence,—Christ's first clear and plain prediction of His approaching cross.

He had hinted as much almost at the beginning, to Nicodemus ; but never till now, we may certainly say, had the terrible fact been perceived. Then Peter, moved to the very heart's depth, and forgetting his reverence, indignantly scouts the bare idea, —“This shall not be unto Thee:” but the Lord rebukes Peter for seeing only the earthly shame, and none of the heavenly glory ; and goes on to predict that same felon's cross even for them, if they would not be ashamed when the day of glory came.

But what a sharp grief to these men, who loved their Master in their rough, strong, though yet unenlightened way ! What a

sudden dashing down of their hopes of earthly glory,—not only for Him, but themselves! Shall we add, What a blow to their faith? They must have long perceived His lessening influence, though they had probably never liked to speak to Him about that; but they had never dreamt of this. A felon's death for their Master, and for them, who had all been at least honest men! This the end of giving up all and following Him! Instead of the promised kingdom, the cross!

Then it was,—notice, reader, just then, "six days after"—"Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John into a high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them." It was probably night, for the three were asleep; and, as usual at night, Jesus was praying; but "as

He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered," the whole being gleamed with glory; His face did shine as the sun, His very raiment streamed out light; and Moses and Elias, the two great representatives of the preceding dispensations of God to the Jewish people, clad in heavenly splendour, were manifested to the amazed Apostles. But further, there descended a halo of glory, like the Shechinah of old, which enfolded them all; and out of the brightness comes a voice they know can be none other than the voice of God: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him!"

No wonder these sturdy men were struck to the ground,—as Paul afterwards, and John still later. This was an anticipation of heaven, and their eyes were yet of the earth.

What think you is now, what will be for

ever, the light and glory of heaven? While it will shine with an effulgence now utterly inconceivable, we are distinctly told there is no sun. What then? Literally, as well as spiritually, "the glory of God and of the Lamb doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof." Christ glorified is *the* Sun of heaven. And not only shall we be able to bear the full stream of that brightness, which is far above the shining of the noon-day sun, but (wonderful transfiguration!) we shall shine too,—subordinately indeed, but still "as the Sun,"—by virtue of our union with His glorified body.

But, returning to these men,—though that vision made them for the moment "sore afraid," we can easily see how unspeakably reassuring it must have been just then, and

what a stay in all future trouble. No wonder we find Peter speaking more than thirty years after of "the excellent glory."

But I called the transfiguration the last great turning-point in our Lord's ministry. From this time the character of that ministry shows in many respects great outward change. Up till now Christ had almost everywhere sought to proclaim Himself, now for the first time He begins to charge the twelve they should tell no man that He was Christ. With occasional exceptions, He now seeks seclusion. From this point, too, dates the great decrease already noticed in the number of His miracles, even when He is showing Himself openly. A corresponding change is also observable in the teaching of this latter period. As a rule it is more prophetic, more full, too, of solemn and affecting warn-

ings to the Jewish people. An undertone of profound melancholy in presence of their unbelief, without however one touch either of weakness or of bitterness, characterizes much of the Lord's sayings henceforth ; while as regards the twelve, the cross (only just come full into the Apostles' view) is never allowed to be long lost sight of for the future. Christ has begun already in a certain sense to bear His cross, and would have them in that sense even now bear it with Him. "The Son of man shall be delivered up, and shall be crucified," is His pathetic confidence now often reiterated.

And we must not fail to regard the transfiguration as the Father's consecration to the suffering, as the baptismal glory had been to the doing. It is of the cross that Moses and Elias, as representing God's law and

God's predicted mercy, both speak ; it is with the obedience of the death for us, no less than with the life, that the Father is "well pleased."



CHAPTER III.

Seclusion at Capernaum and Return to Jerusalem.

AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN.

NEXT day, at the foot of the mountain, a crowd has gathered round the nine awaiting Apostles, for a demoniac boy has been brought to them for cure, and they, without their Master's presence or commission, are unable to do what they had already done two and two, and what far more abundantly they did afterwards. The Scribes delightedly make the most of their weakness to the common people, and "dispute" with the Apostles. But Jesus comes, and in an instant all is changed. How graphic is St.

Mark's account! (Ch. ix. 14.) The transfiguration glory still lingers about that face (as Sinai's glory on the face of Moses), and hence doubtless "immediately all the people when they saw Him were struck with awe, and running to Him, saluted Him."

Then follows a wonderful picture of the paroxysm brought on by the presence of the Redeemer; the father's anguish, his imperfect faith, and the retarded cure; then Christ's word of resistless power, and the last struggle of the departing demon.

When alone with the twelve, Christ (again speaking of the cross) begins to return towards the lake; and, strange as it may sound, actually enters Capernaum. But we must remember that He had now been absent nearly six months, that His only attempt to return had been instantly frustrated, and

that consequently it is probable His enemies looked on Him as now vanquished and harmless; that the chief of them, from Jerusalem, had now returned there; and that the rest had gone, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; while with the common people (ever quick to feel, but, alas, quick to forget!) his words and works had perhaps already begun to fade.

However, Christ re-enters Capernaum, and for a few weeks, apparently, dwells there unmolested. But this is most striking,—there is not a miracle, not even a sermon now. He is to them no longer the wondrous being He was. Capernaum *was* exalted unto heaven, but now already is her future doom foreshadowed. Christ dwells here seemingly in perfect seclusion with the twelve, preparing them (as doubtless all through this last

period) in an especial manner for their soon approaching work.

And from the Gospels we know how much they needed it. On the way to Capernaum, they, even to the very last strangely unable to get the idea of the earthly kingdom out of their minds, disputed who should be the greatest when it came; and Christ sets a little child in their midst, and says to them (and us), that the least in his own eyes among His followers, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

This is all St. Luke (ch. ix. 46) says of this section, but St. Matthew devotes ch. xviii. to it, and St. Mark the latter part of ch. ix.

From the two we find that He teaches them love to the little ones, and warns, by the metaphor of the millstone, against de-

spising those whose angels behold the heavenly Father's face. He teaches, too, forbearance towards those not quite identified with them, so long as substantial union exists, by the example of the man casting out devils in His name; the unutterable value of one soul, by the parable of the one lost sheep; and the necessity of a boundless forgiveness, by that of the ten thousand talents.

There was doubtless much other teaching besides these specimens, and which the Holy Spirit afterwards brought to their remembrance; but these are now the only recorded incidents save one, and that is of a semi-public kind.

The collectors of the temple tribute (a poll-tax for the expenses of public worship) come for His tax, as that of all other Jews.

Christ tells Peter that He, as the Son, ought to be free of His Father's house ; but not insisting on His right, directs him to pay the money out of the fish's mouth.

And now comes that portion of the ministry to which I ask the reader's special attention, for it is here the greatest chronological difficulties occur.

Neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark henceforth give any incident till the final Passover journey of the following March. As already noticed, each Evangelist, in giving the same blessed Gospel, has his own particular scope. Christ's complete career must be deduced from them all. But from the remaining Evangelists (St. Luke and St. John), we see that great occurrences took place in the interim ; and by comparing Luke, from (ix. 51) to (xvii. 11) with John (vii. 1) to (xi. 54) we

have a most complete and strikingly harmonious picture. We shall see this if we now proceed.

Christ remains in seclusion at Capernaum until—now comes in St. John ch. vii.—His brethren, who did not believe in Him, taunt Him with it, and say, as the feast of tabernacles approaches, "Depart hence, and go into Judæa. No man doeth anything in secret. Show Thyself to the world." As the dates of these feasts are known, they become chronologically invaluable. This feast fell, we are told, that year, on Oct. 19th; and Jesus, after eighteen months absence from Jerusalem, when His time was come, went up to it.

While St. John gives as usual the occurrences there, St. Luke (ch. ix. 51) gives an account of the journey. He sent messengers

before His face, and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. But here we see a signal instance of the change in public feeling. Christ is not good enough now for even outcast Samaria. Before they had joyfully received Him, and detained Him two days; now all is forgotten, save that He is a Jew on His way to a Jewish feast, and they refuse Him. The two "sons of thunder," indignant at their ingratitude, are for calling down fire from heaven; but the ever patient Jesus simply passes on. One man offers to follow Him; but Christ is now the wanderer, and while foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.

And, arrived in unbelieving Jerusalem (John vii.), what takes place? Perhaps the

answer has been partially prepared. There is no miracle. There are only words in the temple such as never man spake: "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Then, for the first time He publicly charges on the Pharisees the intention of His murder: "Why go ye about to kill Me?" They indignantly and abusively scoff at the idea: "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee?" Christ tells them that they have never forgiven Him curing the man at Bethesda, making him whole on the Sabbath day; and adds, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Some of the multitude are touched: "He is a good Man." And as regards His works, they say, "When the Christ comes, after all

will *He* do greater works?" Others call Him a deceiver; but even discussion is dangerous to the Pharisees, so the temple guard is sent to seize Him, but fail. On the last day of the feast there is (still without a miracle) the discourse in the temple about the water of life and the Holy Spirit; and again a division of opinion, again a failure in an attempted arrest, and this time because His words had gone home to the hearts of the guard.

Jesus is again in the temple the following morning, and the effects of His teaching are now apparent (ch. viii. 1): "All the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them." The Pharisees, who hated Him all the more because He always seemed to foil them, and again afraid to strike openly because of the people, now set a trap. What

they want is (what they have never yet had) a clear case of His suspected opposition to Moses; for then the legal punishment of the Book of Deuteronomy is both swift and sure,—stone Him.

So they bring the woman taken in adultery, and say (in tones and with manner easily imagined), "Master (the old English for teacher), *Moses* said that such should be stoned, but what sayest *Thou*?" Jesus, who at first apparently ignores them, suddenly draws Himself up, that He may look them full in the face, and says in effect, "Very good: only let the man among you who is guiltless of this very sin, cast the first stone." Jesus knew those men. That was emphatically an "adulterous" generation. Need I add, that it was therefore a generation doomed to national disaster? Does not all

history, sacred and secular, Old Testament and New, ancient Roman and recent European, show this? Have Englishmen yet to learn this lesson?

But, as regards these men, hypocrites as they were, they cannot bear that sudden word and look, and in confusion and discomfiture slink one by one away; and Christ then dismisses the woman with the warning, "Sin no more." He passes no sentence, because the time of condemnation is not yet, but of the impenitent is yet to come.

But on the following Sabbath Christ Himself supplies His enemies with a clear case, far beyond their most sanguine hopes. His temple-teaching about the light of life, His own and the Father's witness, His mission from the Father, lead to a discussion which

is abruptly ended by His statement, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I AM."

I AM! The very word of Jehovah's self-revelation at the burning bush! and no wonder, for Christ, as the Angel of the covenant, was He who had uttered it.

But to these men, who knew not their own Scriptures, nor the attributes of the promised Messiah, it was blasphemy, and the bringing in of strange gods, of which Moses' punishment was stoning; and in an instant they catch up the loose blocks and fragments lying about the yet unfinished temple. But His hour is not yet come, and He disappears,—passes through the midst of them, and so passes by; and as He passes by (ch. ix.), He sees the man blind from his birth, and with Divine composure stops and

cures him,—almost the last specially recorded cure in Jerusalem.

Again He faces His would-be murderers in the discourse on the Good Shepherd. (John x. 1—18.) However, no violence is here recorded, only the divided state of the multitude.



CHAPTER IV.

The Last Wanderings.

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY.

BUT Jesus now leaves Jerusalem, probably for the hill country of Judæa, though the exact place is not stated. This journey we must necessarily insert between John (x. 21) and (x. 22.) St. Luke, where we left that Evangelist (ch. x. 1), gives the occurrences. As towards the close of the Capernaum ministry He sent forth the twelve two and two, so now as opposition deepens, and the end of all is approaching, He similarly sends forth the seventy. To this period belong all the occurrences from Luke (x. 1) to (xiii. 22.) Christ's private visit to Bethany, where

Mary chooses the good part, which He refuses to let Martha take from her; the wonderful series of parables of the good Samaritan, the friend at midnight, the strong man armed, the seven devils, the rich fool, the lord's return, the barren fig-tree, and the incidents connecting them; the whole ending with one miracle,—the cure of the woman with the spirit of infirmity, in a country synagogue on the Sabbath day.

After two months absence, Christ reappears at the Feast of Dedication, probably on Dec. 20th. We now take up St. John, at ch. (x. 22.) It was winter. In Solomon's porch the Jews press round Him, and say, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt?" as if *He* made them to doubt! "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Christ answers, "I did tell you" (doubtless referring to the

memorable statement, "Before Abraham was I AM"): "and ye believed not." And in an instant afterwards He repeats His witness in the words, "I and my Father are one." And then—oh, strange inconsistency of human nature, or hypocrisy, or both!—again they try to take His life for blasphemy; and again He escapes, and leaves Jerusalem for the other side Jordan,—Bethabara, or Bethany in Peræa. (John x. 40.)

There were two reasons, if we may reverently imagine, why the Lord chose Peræa. It was the only part of the Holy Land in which He had not yet dwelt, and being in Herod's jurisdiction, He was out of the power of the high priests at Jerusalem.

Here He remains probably four or five weeks; and John tells us, though without

details (ch. x. 41, 42), that many believed on Him there.

And now again comes in St. Luke's Gospel, where we left it. (Ch. xiii. 22.) We there read of another journey *towards* Jerusalem: "And He went through the cities and villages" (beyond doubt of Peræa), "teaching and journeying *towards* Jerusalem." Why *towards* Jerusalem,—why it was destined not to be *to* Jerusalem, we shall now see. In one of the villages, the Pharisees, anxious to get Him into Judæa, and their power, again, adopt a stratagem, which Christ at once sees through and exposes. "Depart hence," they say, out of Herod's jurisdiction, "for Herod will kill Thee." *Herod* seek to kill Thee! or the Pharisees of Jerusalem! Christ exposes their stratagem by declaring that He will depart, "for it cannot be that

a Prophet should perish *out of Jerusalem.* (Ch. xiii. 32.) But He sends a message which they may take, if they like, to Herod : that He will not depart for two days. And those two days ministry are found in Luke xiv., xv., xvi., xvii. 1—10.

Perhaps few passages give us a much better idea of the self-imposed pressure of His work, the rate at which He laboured, than the record, which is after all perhaps only partial, of this two days ministry. Details are impossible, but notice that it contained two of His greatest parables,—that of the prodigal son, and the rich man and Lazarus.

But why does He choose to remain two days? There is probably no Gospel harmony more striking and beautiful than the answer supplied to this question. Turning

to St. John where we left it, we read (ch. xi. 1) of the sickness of Lazarus, and the sisters' message to Christ: "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." And in ver. 6, we read, "When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was."

The two days of Luke and John are doubtless the same. When the Pharisees seek to draw Him back to Jerusalem, He has already heard the news of the sickness of Lazarus, already foreseen the natural issue, and has pre-determined "for the glory of God" to abide two days in Peræa, and then, proceeding to Bethany, to work that great miracle which should pre-eminently prove Him the Lord of life, and convince those waverers still open to conviction. And it is interesting here to observe that while

the Lord is thus waiting out the self-imposed two days, the NAME Lazarus is heard in His teaching, though in quite a different connection—in His parabolic instruction. May we not say that the name was on the lips, because the friend who bore it was all the while on His heart ?

And now the glory of Christ's displays of omnipotence comes to its all-marvellous climax. He goes and raises Lazarus, now four days dead, from the grave. It was His third miracle of resurrection, but the first of a buried man, and the first of the kind at or near Jerusalem. John gives its effects. Many even of His opponents believed now. It afterwards swelled the triumph of His palm-Sunday entry. "Many met Him because He had done this miracle," and multitudes came from Jerusalem to

see Lazarus, and through him believed on Jesus.

But it roused up the more hardened to instant action. They would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Hate is blinder even than love. They hold a council, in which they first admit the miracle, and then seek how to put Him to death. Christ, without entering Jerusalem, at once withdraws to Ephraim (John xi. 54), an obscure place on the hills of the Samaritan frontier, about six hours journey from Jerusalem.

But not for long. Now the hour had come. He starts from Ephraim, probably about the middle of February, for the final Passover and the cross. And now St. Matthew and St. Mark add their accounts of this final journey to St. Luke's. Matt. (xix. 1) ;

Mark (x. 1) ; Luke (xvii. 11.) St. John only takes up the narrative again at the arrival at Bethany. (Ch. xii. 1.)

St. Luke's is here the fullest account. Christ goes, not the six hours journey direct south to Jerusalem, but (it is a wonderful and touching thought) He will visit, on the way to His cross, all the scenes of His ministry, in a great final tour: going northward through the midst of Samaria, stopping to cure the lepers; still northward, through the midst of Galilee, the home of His childhood, and the scene of most of His wonders; then turning east into Peræa, and then again southward, and following the parallel of the Jordan; blessing little children on His way, answering questions, teaching parables,—such as the importunate widow and the Pharisee and publican,—to cross the Jordan at Jericho, only

fifteen miles from Jerusalem, save Zacchæus, and give sight to the blind.

And now unwontedly He goes before His disciples, and as they follow up the rocky defile between Jericho and Bethany, they see in His face a sternness of resolution which we can understand, but which awes and amazes them. This is one of Mark's graphic touches: "As they followed they were afraid." And then again Christ speaks of the cross. Many Passover caravans seem to join them on their journey, which is finished at Bethany, probably on the Friday evening.



CHAPTER V.

Conclusion.

SUMMARY OF PART II.

THE chief wanderings of the last year resolve themselves (I say this for clearness sake) into six.

(1) From Capernaum to the Syrian border, and thence to Decapolis.

(2) From Decapolis and Bethsaida, northwards to Cæsaræa Philippi, and thence to the seclusion at Capernaum.

(3) From Capernaum (in October) to the feast of tabernacles at Jerusalem, thence into retreat among the hills of Judæa,

(4) Thence to the feast of dedication (in December), and withdrawal into Peræa.

(5) Journey thence to the grave of Lazarus, and escape to Ephraim, whence—

(6) The final and comprehensive journey to the Cross.

And now our task is virtually concluded. We have traced the outlines of Christ's life, through all its great divisions, almost to the foot of Calvary. Remember that its four great landmarks are the manifestation at the age of twelve, the baptism, the first rejection, and the transfiguration; for the epiphany evidences the whole private life, the baptism turns the life into the ministry, the great rejection of John v. changes the scene of that ministry from Jerusalem to

Galilee, and the rejection at Capernaum at the end of the second year changes it into a ministry of wandering, which wandering ends at Bethany six days before the cross, already foreshadowed at the transfiguration.

The events of those last six days (so full of unspeakable interest), though in one sense mostly belonging to Christ's active life, are yet on the one hand so comparatively well known, and on the other so special in their character, that I shall not now enter upon them. The ministry respecting which there is ever any chronological difficulty, closed on the arrival at Bethany. The main facts which follow,—the feast at Simon's house,—the sudden enthusiasm of the Palm Sunday,—the weeping over Jerusalem,—the second and final cleansing of the temple on the Monday,—the wonderful ministry of the Tuesday

(Christ's last ministerial day),—the final woes to the Pharisees, and the last prophecies and parables on the Mount of Olives,—the perfect seclusion of Wednesday and Thursday at Bethany, then on Thursday night the last supper, Gethsemane, the betrayal (without which the Pharisees might still have been foiled),—the examination before Annas, then Caiaphas, then Pilate, then Herod, then Pilate again,—all these are well known. And the end of all: "they crucified Him,"—that, too, is well known.

And yet would to God it were *well known!*

What do we all *know* about that cross? We want no more than God has revealed, but we must receive no less.

On the one hand, it presents, as in a mirror, but also as in a focus, the depth of

Jewish, and therefore human, ingratitude, depravity, blindness, guilt.

On the other, it marks and consummates such a career of devotion, self-sacrifice, patience, courage, truthfulness, love, as will defy our praises even in heaven, and will never have done astonishing and kindling even in the world.

If it was the climax downwards of four thousand years of guilt, it was the upward climax of four thousand years of gradual revelation, in sundry times and divers manners, answering the desire of all nations in a true King and a true Sacrifice, revealing the heavenly Father, reconciling Jew and Gentile, fulfilling the law and the prophets.

If it represented the overflowings of ungodliness because they crucified *Him*, it

represents also, in an unfathomable mystery, the love of God, because He gave His Son for this, and of Christ, because He gave Himself and laid down His life.

If it shows the power and cunning of Satan in working this, it shows also the power and wisdom of Christ in destroying through that very death, him that had the power of death, and delivering those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. The Cross of Christ is the great meeting-place in the world's history of hell and earth and Heaven. Thank God, too, it is the field of God's victory. As the Saviour died, Heaven's light fell upon it.

My dear reader, from every point of view study and grasp that Cross! It is the source of strength and courage under the daily crosses of life, the secret of victory over a

hostile world and our rebellious self, the mighty constraining cause of sacrifice for others, by the kindling of His blessed example and spirit.

For Himself it was no less the key of the gates of heaven than the crowbar of the portals of hell ; while it is ever in His hand the arrow to the sinner's heart, and the sceptre of His spiritual kingdom.

But beyond all, remember it was the Cross of Atonement. *Christ died for your sins.* Do you, hating and fighting against your sins, yet trust and rest in this only,—“CHRIST DIED FOR ME”? I hope so, for Christ's blood stains eternally all whom it does not wash ; but if so, rejoice, for “the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin.”

Then, though your sins be as scarlet,

they shall be as wool; though they be as crimson, they shall be as snow; nay, whiter—white as the heavenly righteousness on earth of Jesus Christ. “He was made SIN for us who knew no sin, that we (who otherwise knew no righteousness) might be made the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Him.”





*Remember the words of the Lord Jesus,
how He said,—*

“ I am the Light of the world ; he
that followeth Me shall not walk in
darkness, but shall have the Light of
Life.”

JOHN viii. 12.

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